

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FALL 1975

Quarterly



The Rutland Historical Society publishes the Quarterly for its members and the residents of the original town of Rutland, Vermont, now comprising the towns of West Rutland, Proctor, Rutland and the City of Rutland. Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of dues to the treasurer. Annual dues, payable in October, are two dollars for regular members, or ten dollars for contributing members.

The annual meeting of the Society was held in the first floor hearing room of the Rutland County Court House on October 5. A capacity crowd heard guest speaker Dr. Samuel Engle Burr, Jr. speak on "Aaron Burr in New England". The results of the election for officers:

President: Arch J. Todd. Rutland Town
Vice President: Alan G. Ridlon. Clarendon
Secretary: Frances E. Frederick. Rutland City
Treasurer: George J. Covalt. West Rutland
Directors to serve two years:
Kenneth S. Fisher. Rutland City
Eleanor D. Douglas. Rutland City
F. P. Elwert. Rutland City



The "most awful brick structure" referred to by Tom Ripley had stood on this site- the northeast corner of West and Church Streets. The present Longfellow School is shown under construction in 1890. The general contractor was Bela Dexter, grandfather of the donor of this photo, Warren W. Dexter.

I was five years old when what was optimistically called my education began, in a most awful brick structure of post-bellum design. The school housed the baby class, the second grade, & the middle school; while upstairs was the grammar school where the tough guys made it hot for a succession of young women teachers.

No lawns, no gravelled paths, no flowering shrubs graced the approach to this temple of learning; mud in spring, frozen ruts in autumn and drifts in winter surrounded it. "Out back" stood the usual row of small structures, unspeakable in their filth. We, as carefully brought up children, were not permitted to enter them. "Teacher, may I go out?" was the formula, accompanied by the time-honored gesture of snapping fingers; at which Teacher, her face reminiscent of a badly nicked battle ax, barked in her machine-gun voice, "Yes—be sry." By special arrangement we were allowed to trot home,¹ and back when wriggling legs warned that it was time to do something about it. The "priviledged classes" we were.

In the grammar school we acquired the Fourth Reader, a sombre-looking volume. In it was a poem entitled "Speak Gently to the Erring." What *was* the "Erring"? Some kind of fish came vaguely to my mind, and there it stuck. Why speak gently to it? The question didn't bother me at all . . .

From *A VERMONT BOYHOOD* by Thomas Emerson Ripley.

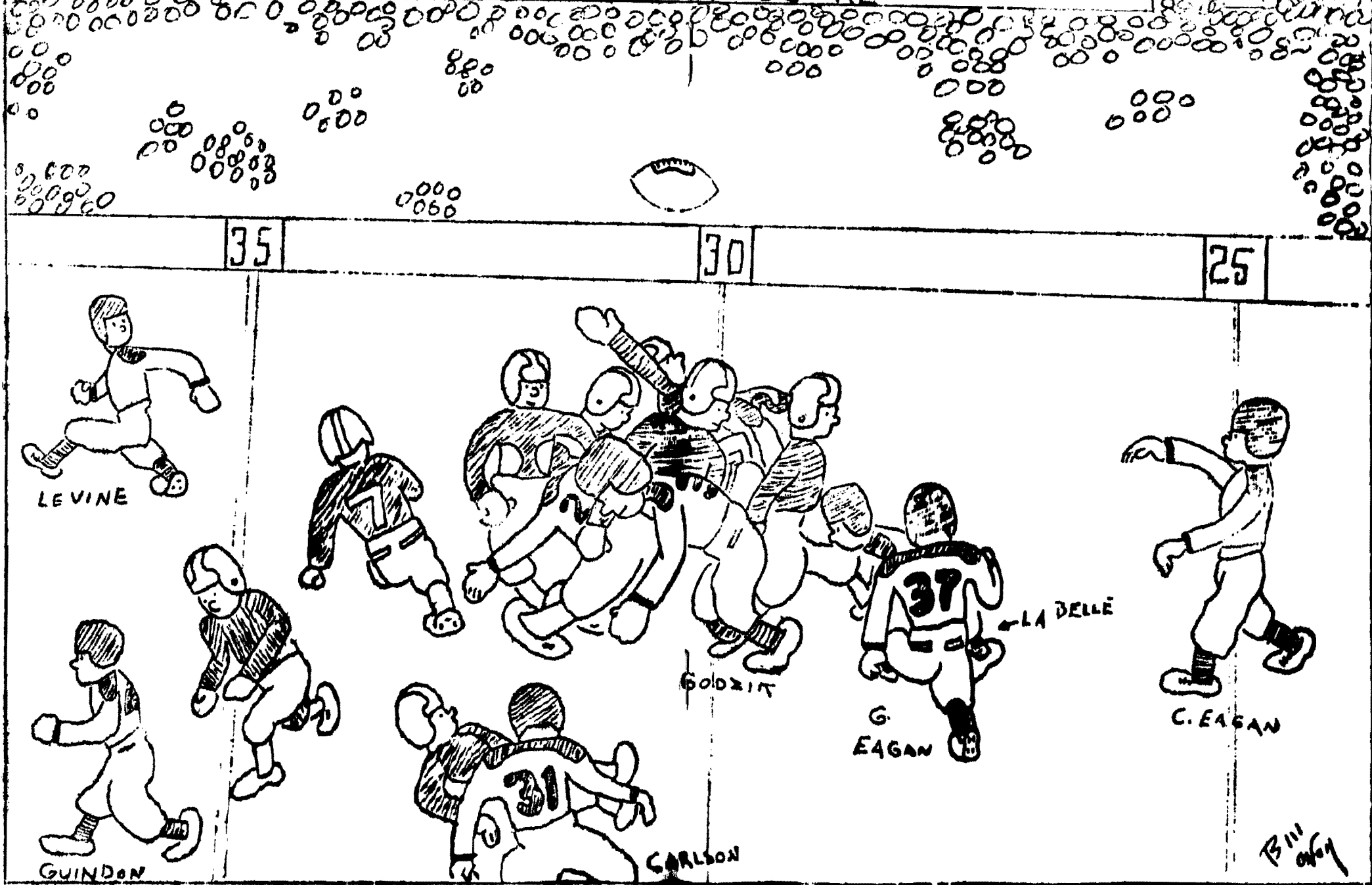
¹Tom Ripley's home was at northeast corner of West and Cottage Streets. The school was a short block away, where Longfellow is now.

THE COVERS

On the front cover and running onto the back cover is a photograph of a Rutland High School group about 1897. At left in the rear row is Bernice R. Tuttle, a founding member of the Society. On the back cover and at the right of the rear row is Ruby Clark (Barnard) mother of members Doris Barnard Dolt and Ruth Barnard. The photo is by G. H. Emery; gift of Ruth Barnard.

On the next two pages is a sports cartoon by William O'Neil from the December 1932 issue of the West Rutland High School "Green and Gold."

W. RUTLAND - VERSUS - RUTLAND
 PICTURE SHOWS 25 YD PASS IN LAST MINUTE OF
 PLAY, EAGAN TO LEVINE. W. RUTLAND HOWEVER
 WAS UNABLE TO SCORE





The home of the Rutland English and Classical Institute for many years was here at 61 South Main Street, the so-called Chipman, Strong or Morse home.

A JULIA DORR REMINISCENCE

The "Academy" was the second story of the old town hall, just beyond the shadow of the tall church steeple. The stairs were rough, and not always over-clean. The one large room, with its whitewashed walls and its many windows, was plain as a flag-staff. Two or three blackboards, dingy with age, faced the five rows of dull red desks that ran backward to the farthest wall. The teacher's large desk was at the right of the door. In the middle of the room there was a great box-stove and there may have been a chair of two for chance visitors. That was all. There was not a globe, nor a map, nor a picture. There may have been a big dictionary for the common weal, but I am not sure even of that.

As for the scholars, they were a motley group—democratic to the last degree. As we crowded round the stove on a keen, frosty morning, when all the windows were ground glass and every nail in the heavy door was white, "cloth of frieze" touched "cloth of gold," and neither was disturbed by the contact.

The village Academy of that day taught concentration if it taught nothing else. Study and recitation went on in the same room and at the same time. We had but few iron-clad rules. Whispering inordinately was, of course, not allowable, but if there was real occasion for speaking we spoke, and no one was the worse for it. We had never heard the expression "good form." It was not in vogue then. But if it had been, we would have said with one voice that it was not good form to disturb others.



The RECI football team of 1895. Third from left in rear row is Warren E. Potter, uncle of member Noel Laird. Both pictures are from the student magazine of the RECI, a run of which was given the Society by Mr. Laird.

Perhaps the question oftenest asked of those who have dared to live beyond fourscore is "where and how were you educated?" But where and when does education begin? With the child's first breath? For myself I have no recollection of any time when I could not read fluently; but I began to browse at my own sweet will in my father's well-chosen library—a rather large one for that time and place—when I was six years old. Sometimes I think the best part of my rather desultory education was the result of that browsing. It taught me the love of books, and a kind of hero-worship that was closely akin to reverence for the men who wrote them.

From "When I Was a School-Girl" in *Harper's Bazaar*. October, 1912.
Gift of Frank P. Sullivan.

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